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Cox: Opening Remarks

# Opening Remarks

## Pathways to Peace

Will we ever be free from war? If you side with conventional wisdom and civilization's track record, it's safe to say that this planet may never know peace. War, it seems, is an inevitable consequence of our existence.

But that certainly doesn't rule out doing everything we can to learn about each other and the globe's myriad cultures in hopes of strengthening our understanding of one another. Bob Pendleton '49, a World War II veteran who attended SU through the GI Bill of Rights, recently sent me a letter and several columns he's written about his lifelong hope that war will vanish. Since his high school days more than six decades ago, he says, he has questioned thousands of people about whether they believe war can be abolished. An overwhelming majority have told him "no," but he has held strong to the belief that "if men start wars, then they can stop wars." While at SU, he worked with international students who gave him hope, helping him "realize that world peace was possible." Today, with like-minded members of Veterans for Peace, he continues to share his thoughts on the topic and to hope that people will "start thinking of positive ways to achieve freedom from war."

One organization that has taken on that task is the Alexia Foundation for World Peace and Cultural Understanding, which was established by the parents of Alexia Tsairis, an aspiring photojournalist who was one of the promising students lost in the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103. For the past 15 years, the foundation has promoted global awareness through photojournalism by supporting photographers who travel the world to chronicle the staggering effects of

conflict and social injustice. Last spring, in collaboration with SU, the foundation published *Eyes on the World*, which documents the work of Alexia photographers.

As you'll see, beginning on page 36, the images are gripping and powerful.

In this issue, you will also find a profile of a remarkable student, John Dau '08 (page 19), a Sudanese refugee who escaped the ghastly horrors of war in his homeland and endured years in refugee camps before arriving in Central New York. Today, he shares his message of perseverance, faith, and hope with others and is working to establish a medical clinic in southern Sudan.

Here at the University, educators continue to explore the issue of diversity (page 22), emphasizing the importance of students learning to understand differences and to recognize the value that diversity brings to their lives.

Without such lessons in understanding, whether they're from the classroom or life experiences, we'll be bogged down in the quagmire of senseless ignorance and bigotry. And that, as we know, is a place where conflict and war develop their roots. It's a place that has forever altered the lives and thoughts of people like Bob Pendleton, John Dau, and the Tsairises. Their dedicated efforts show us that the path to peace is a daunting one, but well worth traveling.

JAY COX  
Editor





# table of Contents

# SYRACUSE

Fall 2006, Volume 23, Number 3

## FEATURES

### 22 **Commitment to Diversity**

By fostering a rich mixture of ideas and talents, the University seeks to instill an understanding and appreciation for today's global society in students.

### 30 **Making Music**

The new Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries will equip students for careers in an ever-changing field.

### 36 **Global Images**

The book *Eyes on the World*, a collaboration between SU and the Alexia Foundation, brings focus to human plight around the globe.

## DEPARTMENTS

**2** Opening Remarks

**4** Quad Angles

**6** University Place

**16** SU People

**48** Alumni Journal

**64** View from the Hill

**Cover Photo:** Southern Sudan, 2002, by Justin Yurkanin '02, courtesy of the Alexia Foundation for World Peace and Cultural Understanding



Teru Kuwayama | South India, 1999